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which it is situated not being yet proclaimed), we parted on Peek Downs,—Landsborough and Kemmis made for Fort Cooper: Buchanan (who jointly with Landsborough discovered the country), I, and a black fellow started for the westward.

Never was there a party better equipped for a short exploring trip. We had 16 picked horses, 5 of them carrying packs. Our provisions consisted of 40 lbs. of prime dried beef, cured with sugar, 120 lbs. of flour, and tea and sugar in abundance. On the 1st July we camped on Phillip's Creek, near the Mount of that name, crossed the range at Shepherd's Awl, and steered by compass west by south; crossed the Belyando on the fourth day, and when 20 miles west of it saw Mount *Narrien*, which bore from us east by south, and we estimated its distance to be about 45 miles. About 20 miles further on we crossed the watershed of a large river (not laid down in the maps), which we supposed to be the Cape of Leichardt. From that river to the river which we named the Landsborough (*quere* the Thomson of Mitchell)—or rather to the good country which commences about 30 miles from it, a distance of 130 to 160 miles—we crossed no creeks of any consequence, and the chief part of the country produced nothing but desert-grass. We were generally lucky, however, in getting nice spots to camp on, and we kept our horses in good condition. I must say, with regard to this good country, that, notwithstanding the distance was 100 miles further from the Belyando than it was thought to be, it was quite up to what had been said of it. In fact, I never saw it equalled in Australia, take its position and distance from a shipping port out of consideration. The river runs south-west, has in places a great number of channels, and is evidently subject to very high floods. The position of this country at its centre we found to be E. long. $143^{\circ} 40'$, S. lat. $22^{\circ} 30'$. On our return we travelled 50 miles on one of the main branches or tributaries of the river, the country of which was well watered and at places very fine; but after leaving this creek we did not cross a watercourse of any description for 90 miles, and the country was almost entirely covered with desert-grass until we approached the Cape. We were lucky, however, in getting water at times in puddles, and, although our horses were pulled down, we ourselves did not suffer. We reached Fort Cooper on our return in 35 days from our starting at Broadsound.

6. *Extracts from a Despatch from Governor SIR H. BARKLY to the DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, on BURKE'S Expedition.*

THE mystery in which the fate of the Victorian Exploring Expedition was shrouded, when I lately alluded to it, was soon afterwards dispelled on the arrival of Mr. Brahe from the relief party under Mr. Howitt, with intelligence that King, the sole survivor, had been found living among the natives on Cooper's Creek: his companions Burke, Wills, and Grey, having perished from exhaustion on returning from the Gulf of Carpentaria, which it now appears they reached in safety in the month of February last.

How thoroughly indeed the gallant band accomplished their perilous mission will be seen from the journals and charts of their leaders, which are fortunately preserved to us, and serve incontestably to prove that, without detracting from the credit due to McDouall Stuart, whose route was unknown to them and far distant from that they followed, to Burke and Wills exclusively belongs the honour of first crossing the Australian continent from sea to sea.

The details of their discoveries and of their sufferings will be best learned from the simple and touching narrative which poor Wills left behind him, coupled with the statement of King, which has been taken down by Mr. Howitt. But I will continue, for your Grace's information, the brief sketch of the history of the expedition begun in my despatch of the 20th July, No. 64.

I then mentioned that Mr. Burke had quitted the depôt on Cooper's Creek on the 16th December last, with half his party, leaving the other half there under Mr. Brahe, whom he promoted to the rank of petty officer on the occasion, but with the expectation that the command would almost immediately be assumed by Mr. Wright, whom he had directed to join him as soon as possible with the stores left behind at the Darling. I described also how Mr. Brahe, after waiting beyond the time Mr. Burke had anticipated being absent, and hearing nothing either of his or Wright's party, abandoned the depôt on the afternoon of the 21st April, first burying such provisions as he could spare, after retaining enough to carry him to the Darling.

It now appears that on the evening of that very day, by a strange fatality which seems thenceforth to have prevailed to the end, Burke, Wills, and King (Grey having died four days before), reached the depôt in far too weak and exhausted a state to follow the retreating party with the slightest hope of overtaking them, though that night they slept only 14 miles off.

They found the food that had been left for them, and, after remaining some days to recruit, resolved, most unfortunately, instead of returning the way they had come, to try and reach the out-settlements of South Australia, not above 150 miles distant. Had they taken the route to Menindie, they would have almost immediately met Mr. Wright's advancing party. Depositing a letter, therefore, to this effect in a bottle, which they replaced in the "cache," but again, by fatal mischance, neglecting to alter the inscription which Mr. Brahe had left on an adjacent tree, or to leave any outward sign of their visit, they started on a south-west course. But misfortune pursued their steps; one of the two camels which survived got bogged inextricably, and the other became so weak that they thought it best to kill it for food: and, after wandering on till their limbs would carry them no further, they decided to return, at a point where, though they knew it not, scarce 50 miles remained to be accomplished, and just as Mount Hopeless would have appeared above the horizon had they continued their route for even another day.

Meanwhile Brahe, as described in my previous despatch, revisited the depôt in company with Wright, whom he had met some days after leaving it; but, perceiving no change, they, as a climax to this sad chapter of accidents, resumed their final journey to the Darling without opening the cache or discovering the letter which Burke had substituted for theirs in the bottle.

Thus left to perish in the wilderness, the hapless explorers determined, as a last resource, to seek succour from the aborigines, whom they had at first viewed with suspicion. This was freely and generously afforded so far as it was in their power to give it; but the season was now mid-winter, the clothes of the unfortunates were in rags, and the scanty diet of fish and "nardoo" (the spores of a species of marsillea, which the natives make into bread) was too innutritious to restore frames weakened by previous over-exertion and want of nourishment, and with minds depressed by disappointment and despair, both Burke and Wills gradually sank under their privations, dying about the end of June, whilst we in Melbourne were still ignorant of the abandonment of the depôt, as well as of the obstacles which so long delayed Mr. Wright's arrival at it.

So fell two as gallant spirits as ever sacrificed life for the extension of science or the cause of mankind! Both were in their prime; both resigned comfort and competency to embark in an enterprize by which they hoped to render their names glorious; both died without a murmur, evincing their loyalty and devotion to their country to the last.

How far the sufferings of these devoted men arose from preventible causes, and in what degree any person or persons are to blame for the disastrous termination of a scheme apparently so carefully devised, and which up to a certain point was eminently successful, are questions still to be determined,

and regarding which I express no opinion, because a commission has been appointed by this Government to investigate the whole matter.

The liveliest sympathy was manifested by the entire community on receipt of the glorious though disastrous news; both Houses of Parliament passing resolutions expressive of profound regret at the death of the explorers and of an earnest desire that every mark of respect should be shown to their memory. And it has since been settled, in pursuance of these resolutions, that Mr. Howitt shall be commissioned to send down their remains for a public funeral, and that a monument shall be erected to record an achievement of which Victoria may well feel proud.

Apart, indeed, from the interest which must ever attach to the melancholy fate of these brave men, the results obtained by the expedition are of the very highest importance, both to geographical science and to the progress of civilisation in Australia. The limits of the Stony Desert are proved to extend very little farther north than the point to which Sturt penetrated so many years ago, whilst the country beyond is even more adapted for settlement than that which McDouall Stuart has discovered to the westward of it. According to the summary which poor Burke himself deposited on his return to the *dépôt*, "there is a practicable route to Carpentaria, chiefly along the 140th meridian of east longitude. There is some good country between Cooper's Creek and the Stony Desert, thence to the tropic all is dry and barren; but between the Desert and the Gulf a considerable portion, though rangy (*i. e.* hilly) is well watered and richly grassed."

It has been remarked, too, by the transcriber of Wills's field-book, that "the expedition, except when actually crossing the Desert, never passed a day in which they did not traverse the banks of, or cross, a creek or other water-course."

Such, in fact, is the impression made on the squatters by the accounts received, that the occupation of "Burke's Land" with stock is already seriously contemplated; and there seems little reason to doubt that in the course of a few years the journey from Melbourne to Carpentaria will be performed with comparative facility by passing from station to station. To show the rapidity with which this sort of settlement proceeds in Australia, I may mention that much of the country between the Darling and Cooper's Creek, which the several parties from Victoria have traversed, is already taken up, so that not only sheep but cattle are now depastured within 25 miles of Mount Bulloo, not far from which Burke's expedition struck the creek in question, stretching thence easterly along the Queensland boundary in an almost unbroken chain. To the westward also the country towards the South Australian settlements is likely to be occupied ere long.

I hope to be able to enclose a tracing of the entire route of the Burke and Wills expedition; but the Surveyor-General has, of course, experienced some difficulty in connecting the various rough charts and checking the calculations as to longitude, &c. A fuller description of some parts of the country may also be obtainable when King can be further examined; and there can be little doubt that our knowledge of the portion bordering on the Gulf of Carpentaria will be much extended by the labours of the surveyors on board Her Majesty's corvette or colonial steamer *Victoria*, as well as by the party likewise despatched for the relief of Burke overland from Queensland.

It seems, indeed, not improbable that one or other of these parties, on discovering the record left by the explorers at the mouth of the Flinders River (not the "Albert," as they conjectured), and supposing them never to have got back to their *dépôt* on Cooper's Creek, may pursue their tracks to the southward until themselves in danger; and it has been deemed advisable, in order to guard against any casualty of this sort, as well as for the purpose of connecting Burke's tropical discoveries with the *dépôt* by the best practicable route, to instruct Mr. Howitt to establish his headquarters for the summer there, making

short excursions in every direction around, which, without exposing his men to serious risk, will be better for them than idleness or inactivity.

Some time may thus elapse before the full value and extent of these discoveries can be ascertained; but meanwhile it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that to the liberality and enterprise of one of her youngest colonial offshoots, backed by the heroic self-devotion of Burke and Wills, Great Britain owes the acquisition of millions of available acres, destined at no distant day to swell her imports and afford fresh markets for her manufactures.

7. *On the Gold-Fields of Tuapeka, in New Zealand.*

By J. THOMPSON, Esq.

HEREWITH I have the pleasure of sending a photograph of the gully or valley in which so much gold has been found in this province. The gully is called "Gabriel's," after J. Gabriel Read, the discoverer. It is situated 35 miles west from Dunedin, and 30 north from the mouth of Clutha River, Otago Province. When I was there, a month ago, 6000 people were employed in digging. The photograph will require a lens to analyze the picture; as the naked eye will not discover all the figures represented. I also enclose a small map of the province, lithographed in my office, which will show you the Tuapeka gold-field. I have marked in yellow other spots where gold has been found, but which are not yet worked. I would have sent information to the Society before, but was desirous of seeing the rush over before spreading the news. Much misery is entailed by these blindfold rushes that take place in Australia. The advance of the gold-field will now, however, rest on its own merits; as the excitement has cooled down. The escort brings gold down to Dunedin once a fortnight, and on the last two occasions brought down 12,000 and 16,000 ounces respectively; the digging population being about 6000 to 8000. What I am desirous of laying before the Society is a sketch of the formations of the province, from which its eminent members will be able to anticipate the results of the discovery to this small but interesting colony of Scotchmen.

I may premise that Mr. Ligur, now Surveyor-General of Victoria, was the first to discover gold in this province; since which time it has been detected by various parties, myself included: but no field of enticing richness was found out till Gabriel Read published his discovery. I visited the field when it was first worked, and afterwards when it was in full operation.

The province, which I have traversed in all directions, has great sameness of formation, the mountains consisting of schists and clay-slates. Granites, amygdaloids, and porphyries are found at the Bluff and in the mountains due north from that harbour; I have seen them nowhere else. The seaboard and river-valleys consist of sedimentary formations; such as sand-beds, conglomerates of quartz, pebbles, limestones, coal (rather lignite), and clay-beds. Here and there very frequently basalt, trap, and metamorphic rocks protrude, often in hexagonal prisms. The quartz conglomerates are very abundant, and consist of rounded quartz, cemented by an iron cement; in places taking the appearance of burnt earth. The limestones appear very modern (geologically speaking); I have found recent shells, vertebræ of the *Moa*, bones of small birds, beak included, in this formation. The prevailing formation, however, is schistose, and is almost universally traversed by small veins of quartz, or else nodules of quartz; and the débris of this formation is found in the river-beds, consisting of rounded quartz or flakes of schist. The quartz veins are generally ferruginous. Quartz reefs have not yet been found to my know-